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is also, it seems, due to the beneficent oil. As the traveller approaches Yench'ang he will note that the city walls appear to be weeping or oozing oil, and the explanation of this curious fact becomes strikingly apparent at night time. For in the embrasures all round the walls every yard or so are placed pans of crude oil, which are lit up when darkness falls and illuminate the whole city and neighbourhood in the most remarkable manner. The effect on anyone not expecting it is extremely startling. Night after night throughout the year this desolate little city lost in the wilds of Northern Shensi indulges in this orgy of illumination. But it costs practically nothing and seems to be very effective in scaring off the brigands, who usually make their raids on moonless nights; doubtless the prospect of having a pan of burning oil upset over their heads deters them also.

The next stage on our journey by this route was the city of Yich'uan Hsien, two long marches due south of Yench'ang. The trail runs down the gorges of the Yen Shui, being ledged in the cliff on the left bank, for about 15 li, and then crossing the river by a ford strikes up the hill side to the south to reach the top of the loess plateau some 600 to 700 feet above the valley; continuing across the plateau for an hour or so it then drops steeply to the hamlet of Ankou Chen in the gorge of a tributary of the Yen Shui, called 35 li from Yench'ang. From Ankou the path strikes immediately up the opposite hill to reach the top of the plateau again, the latter here taking the form of a series of flat-topped loess ridges running down towards the Yen Shui from a range trending east and west. A two hours' march to the south up the flat top of one of these ridges brought us to the top of the range (4500 feet), the watershed between the Yen Shui and a stream called the Yunai Ho; the range is composed of grassy downs of loess with occasional outcroppings of rock. From the pass the trail follows a spur to the south, which soon flattens out into the usual square-topped loess ridge, and descends gradually for four to five hours' march, with finally a steep drop into the valley of the Yunai Ho to reach the ruined township of Yunai Chen. The country traversed on this day's march, as also on the following one, consists of loess mountains with a little cultivation on their lower slopes. Villages are very scarce,